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## APPENDIX F | COMMENT LETTERS

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Worcester, MA 01608  
[www.cmrpc.org](http://www.cmrpc.org)

Janet A. Pierce  
Trish Settles  
Sujatha Mohanakrishnan  
Diane Shea  
Robert Hassinger

Executive Director  
Deputy Director  
Deputy Director  
Business Mgr.  
Commission Chair

May 20, 2021

Melissa Cryan  
Division of Conservation Services  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge St., Ste. 900  
Boston, MA 02114

RE: City of Worcester 2020-2027 Open Space and Recreation Plan

Dear Ms. Cryan;

The Central Massachusetts Regional Planning Commission (CMRPC) is writing this letter in support of the City of Worcester and its recently completed 2020-2027 Open Space & Recreation Plan. The City and the Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission are to be commended for their hard work putting this Plan together.

The authors have done a very thorough job and the final document appears compliant with the standards for such plans as promulgated by your office. Worcester has recognized the need to balance new development to accommodate its projected population growth with the need to protect open space. The plan also acknowledges the importance of preserving the City's environmental assets like water and air quality, habitat and wildlife corridors, and tree canopy, which contributes to the entire region's environmental health. The plan also correctly emphasizes the importance of ensuring equitable access to open space and recreational opportunities across the City. Lastly, this plan acknowledges the necessity of adapting open spaces to climate change-related hazards like flooding, and leverages the opportunity to enhance the City's overall resilience through strategic open space planning.

Worcester's Open Space and Recreation Plan provides the City with the specific guidance and action steps needed to accomplish its goals and objectives. Maybe most importantly, Worcester's Plan balances growth with open space preservation and maintenance to protect environmental quality, protect the City's unique historic assets and character, and meet the City's current and future needs for active and passive recreation.

The City of Worcester will be well served by having a State-approved, up-to-date plan, which will help develop its recreation facilities and programs, and preserve and protect its valuable open spaces and natural resources.

Please consider this letter to be a demonstration of CMRPC's support for the Plan and the process used to develop it. We find Worcester's Plan to be fully consistent with CMRPC's 2020 Growth Strategy for Central Massachusetts (2000), its 2004 Update, and the 495 MetroWest Development Compact Plan, (2012). We believe that the plan is also consistent with and supportive of the 2017 Massachusetts Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.

Sincerely,



Trish Settles, AICP  
Deputy Director

Cc: Worcester Parks and Recreation Commission  
Worcester Department of Public Works and Parks  
Worcester City Council

**City of Worcester, Massachusetts**  
**Planning Board**

Albert LaValley  
*Chair*



Eleanor Gilmore – *Clerk*  
Conor McCormack  
Edward Moynihan

June 9, 2021

Melissa Cryan  
Division of Conservation Services  
Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs  
100 Cambridge Street, Suite 900  
Boston, MA 02114

Re: City of Worcester's Draft Open Space & Recreation Plan (2020 Update)

Dear Ms. Cryan:

The Worcester Planning Board has reviewed the City's draft of the Open Space & Recreation Plan Update (2020-2027) and voted at its meeting of May 26, 2021 to offer support for the Plan which we believe the Plan will serve the City well in coming years.

The Board specifically recognized the critically important role of the Plan in creating high quality recreational spaces and programs for Worcester residents, while preserving open space and protecting our environment. In particular, we identified the strengths of the Plan as its focus on equitable access to open space in environmental justice neighborhoods, emphasis on building an open space network to improve quality of life for all communities - especially in dense urban neighborhoods, and encouragement of creative strategies for land acquisition (e.g., via tax title) to return properties to beneficial uses for the public.

Overall, the Board found the draft Plan comprehensive and informative and we look forward to the incorporation of its recommendations into other long-range planning initiatives, including the *Worcester Now* | *Worcester Next* citywide master plan to begin later this year.

Sincerely,

DocuSigned by:  
  
5C1463FABC1548C  
Albert LaValley  
*Chair*

**City of Worcester Planning Board**  
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